

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Take Action For Cleaner Air this Friday

CLEAN AIR ACTION DAY CALLED IN DANE COUNTY FOR FINE PARTICLE POLLUTION

NOTE TO LOCAL NEWS MEDIA: Please help communicate this urgent pollution prevention message, including pollution reduction actions, to Dane County area residents. Fine particle pollution levels could potentially exceed the federal health standard tomorrow, Friday, March 5th.

The Dane County Clean Air Coalition (CAC) today announced a *Clean Air Action Day* for fine particle pollution for **Friday, March 5th**. The *Clean Air Action Day* was triggered by the state Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) issuance late this afternoon of an Air Quality Watch for several Wisconsin counties, including Dane County. According to DNR meteorologists, warm temperatures and light winds create an inversion layer formed by warm air rising over melting snow cover, which results in ideal conditions for trapping fine particles and allowing them to build to potentially unhealthy levels.

What Can You Do to Reduce Fine Particle Pollution?

- Carpool, ride the Metro Transit bus, walk or bike to work or recreational activities.
- Combine errands and reduce trips.
- Don't let engines idle -- It gets 0 MPG!
- Conserve energy at home and work by turning off unnecessary lighting, computers and other electrical devices when not in use.
- Open burning and use of burn barrels should be avoided.
- Avoid use of outdoor wood burning boilers and fireplaces.
- If you use a wood burning stove, make sure it is an efficient model; burn small hot fires with dry, seasoned wood.

On Friday Dane County could experience a build-up of fine particle pollution that exceeds the federal threshold for "unhealthy for sensitive groups" such as children, older adults, people with asthma or heart disease and adults engaged in vigorous outdoor activities.

Dane County air quality currently meets state and federal standards. However, air pollution measurements taken during the past few years indicate that, especially as Dane County continues to grow and U.S. EPA creates more stringent public health standards for air quality, actions must be taken to ensure our air remains healthy into the future. By taking voluntary actions today, residents, businesses and local governments can help avoid the possibility of more drastic mandatory federal regulations costing consumers and businesses millions of dollars in the future.

"On fine particle *Clean Air Action Days* we ask residents, businesses, government agencies and institutions in the County to join us in taking some simple voluntary actions that will reduce fine particle emissions, protect the health of local residents and help ensure that Dane County continues to comply with all federal air quality standards," said Lisa MacKinnon, Project Coordinator of the Clean Air Coalition.

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City of Madison / Dane County / Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce / Kraft Foods / Madison Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
Madison Gas & Electric Company / Madison Metropolitan School District / University of Wisconsin-Madison / Wisconsin Department of Administration
Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services / Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources / Wisconsin Petroleum Council
Wisconsin Petroleum Marketers and Convenience Stores Association

Since the establishment in 2008 of a stricter federal health-based standard for fine particle pollution, Dane County has come closer to the threshold for being declared a “non-attainment area” for fine particle air pollution. Fine particles are very small particles with diameters less than 2.5 microns (about 30 times smaller than the diameter of a human hair). The U.S EPA has indicated it will review the 2008 standard for fine particle pollution, which could result in an even more stringent compliance threshold being established in the near future.

Over half of Dane County’s air pollutants come from our cars and trucks, as well as other gasoline and diesel engines that power everything from construction equipment to leaf blowers. Due to their small size, fine particles are easily inhaled and are deeply deposited into the lungs, which can aggravate and even cause serious health problems such as heart and lung disease. On a *Clean Air Action Day*, residents are advised to monitor their health and to consult their physician if they have any health-related concerns.

For more information on Clean Air Action Days, visit the Dane County Clean Air Coalition website at www.healthyairedane.org. Air Quality Watches and Advisories will be posted on the main DNR internet page, <http://dnr.wi.gov/>, as soon as they are issued. The Air Quality Hotline is 1-866-DAILY AIR (1-866-324-5924) and will be updated when watches or advisories are issued. To sign up for the DNR listserv and receive watches or advisories by e-mail, go to <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/aw/air/health/listserv.html>.

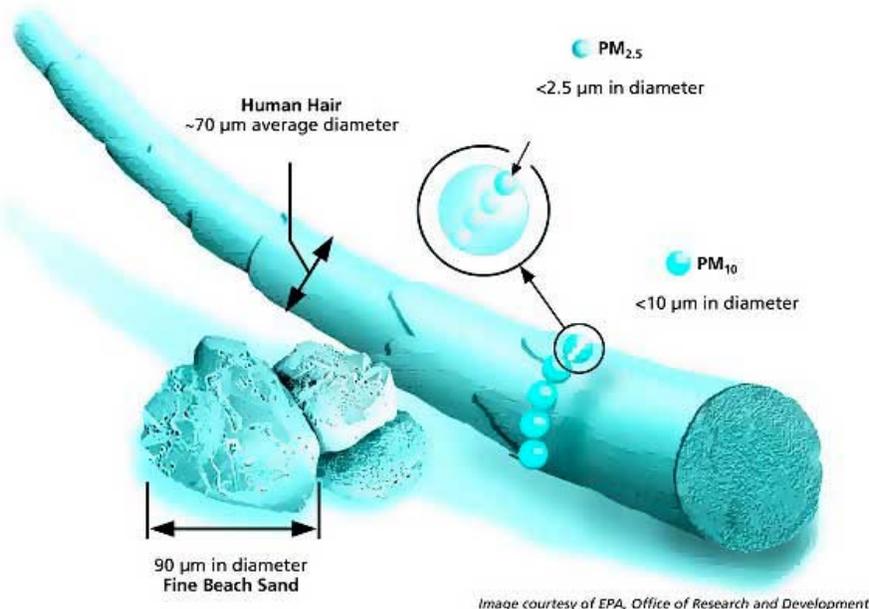


Image courtesy of EPA, Office of Research and Development

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